

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1429

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to automatic external defibrillators in public schools.

Brief Description: Requiring a plan to place automatic external defibrillators in public high schools.

Sponsors: Representatives Hunter, Hinkle, Morrell, Schual-Berke, Clibborn, Green, Lovick, Haigh, VanDeWege and Santos.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/9/07, 2/16/07 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop a plan to require the placement of automatic external defibrillators in all public high schools by September 1, 2010.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Roach, Santos and P. Sullivan.

Staff: Anne Woodward (786-7119); Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Ventricular fibrillation is a potentially fatal form of sudden cardiac arrest in which the heart becomes unable to effectively pump blood and may stop abruptly. Automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) are portable medical devices that can be used on persons who develop this type of cardiac arrest by providing an electric shock that can help restore normal heart rhythm. According to the American Heart Association, effective cardiopulmonary

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resuscitation (CPR), including defibrillation, significantly increases a victim's chance of survival if administered immediately after cardiac arrest.

The AEDs are commonly used by first responders and may also be placed in public areas, including stadiums, office buildings, ferries, airplanes, and schools.

Washington law requires that any person or entity who acquires an AED:

- receive training in its use and in the administration of CPR;
- maintain and test the AED according to manufacturer guidelines; and
- notify local emergency medical services of the location of the AED.

Washington law also immunizes users of AEDs in an emergency setting from civil liability unless their conduct rises to the level of gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct.

Summary of Bill:

The bill directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop a plan to phase in the placement of AEDs in all public high schools in the state by September 1, 2010. From September 1, 2007, to September 1, 2010, an increasing number of public high schools in each successive year will be required to locate AEDs within the school.

School districts are required to place the AEDs in a prominent location in each high school in the district. The AEDs must remain accessible during the school day as well as for extracurricular activities that take place after school hours.

School districts must comply with statutory requirements regarding the use of AEDs. In addition, school districts are responsible for training staff in the use of the AEDs, as well as for incorporating such instruction in its health and fitness curriculum.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Sudden cardiac arrest occurs 220,000 times per year in the United States, including 7,000 times per year to children. Last year, two children in Federal Way suffered sudden cardiac arrest. The rescue rate in areas with good, organized programs is now 60-70 percent, compared with a percent national rescue rate. While an AED can reverse an arrhythmia, its chance of working decreases by 10 percent each minute so time is essential. The current average response time in King County - which leads the nation in cardiac resuscitation - is 5-6 minutes, which is usually too long. The AEDs are very easy to use, and

someone as young as a sixth grader can be trained to use one. They cannot hurt anyone who is using the device. Nor are there problems with liability, since state and federal Good Samaritan laws protect the people who use them. There have been no lawsuits against people using AEDs in emergency situations. The AEDs alone do not save lives; the people using them must be trained in how to use them, there must be an emergency response plan, there must be a communication system, and there must be access to early defibrillation. Currently 50 percent of schools have AEDs, but many schools need to increase awareness about where the AEDs are located and give training on how to use them. This bill would require schools to provide necessary training. Schools are like community centers, and it is important that schools get AEDs so more children do not die from sudden cardiac arrest. Even excellent fire departments can not get there in time, and AEDs are a tool that anyone can use to save a life. If this bill is not passed, children will continue to die every year in schools from sudden cardiac arrest.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Hunter, prime sponsor; Dr. Stephen H. Anderson M.D., American Heart Association and Auburn Regional Medical Center; Darla Varrenti, Nick of Time Foundation; Dr. Jonathan Drezner M.D., University of Washington and American Medical Society for Sports Medicine; Jack C. Robinson, Everett Medic One Foundation; and Jill Frisk, Julia's Gardens Heart Foundation.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.